

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 9462

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: SPAIN: VOX POPULI

REF: MADRID 9423

1. THE SPANISH PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN, LOUDLY. NATIONAL
RADIO (8:00 AM LOCAL TIME) ANNOUNCED THAT WITH 98.6 PERCENT
OF THE VOTE COUNTED, 77PERCENT OF THE ELIGIBLE VOTERS HAD GONE
TO THE POLLS, WITH THE VOTES CAST DIVIDED ROUGHLY 94 PERCENT
"YES", 3PERCENT "NO," AND 3 PERCENT BLANK AND A TINY FRACTION VOID.
THIS MEANS SOME 72 PERCENT OF THE ELIGIBLE VOTERS VOTED FOR
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THE INSTALLATION OF A DEMOCRATIC PARLIAMENT AS SET FORTH
IN THE SUAREZ REFORM PROPOSAL.

2. THE FIGURES ARE PROVISIONAL. THE VOTE COUNT WENT
SLOWLY UNTIL THE SMALL HOURS OF THE MORNING, DESPITE AN
IMPRESSIVE ELECTRONIC APPARATUS, BUT THESE PERCENTAGES

HAVE RUN STEADILY THROUGHOUT THE MOUNTING COUNT.
THERE WILL PROBABLY BE MINOR ADJUSTMENTS AND THE CERTIFICATION OF THE RESULTS ON JANUARY 4 AWAITS AN OFFICIAL COUNT.

3. THE BIGGEST CONTRAST BETWEEN THESE FIGURES AND THOSE OF EVERY PREDICTION WE SAW HERE LIES IN THE MINISCULE "NO" VOTE. NO ONE THOUGHT THE ULTRA RIGHT WOULD GET MUCH, BUT OBVIOUSLY THERE WAS GENERAL OVER-ESTIMATION OF IMMOBILIST SENTIMENT AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CAMPAIGN OF THE OLD RIGHT (BLAS PINAR, GIRON, ET AL.) IN FACT, THE VERY LOW "NO" VOTE PROBABLY HAS THE GOVERNMENT WORRIED ABOUT CHARGES OF MANIPULATION. POLLS INDICATED THAT 15PERCENT OR SO OF THE VOTERS WERE UNDECIDED UP TO THE LAST DAYS, AND THE "YES" VOTE DOUBTLESS ROSE AS A RESULT OF THE ORIOL KIDNAPPING AND THE SUAREZ SPEECH.

4. THE BASQUE PROVINCES VOTED LOW, AS PREDICTED IN THE REF WITH GUIPUZCOA AT 40PERCENT AND VIZCAYA AT ABOUT 52PERCENT. IN CATALUNYA, BARCELONA PARTICIPATION REPORTEDLY WAS AT 64PERCENT, LOWER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE, BUT A DECENT FIGURE WHILE THE OUTLYING CATALAN PROVINCES VOTED AT CONSIDERABLY HIGHER RATES. CURIOUSLY, WE DON'T HAVE HARD FIGURES FOR MADRID, BUT IT WAS GOOD WITH A HEAVY MIDDLE-CLASS TURNOUT MORE THAN BALANCING THOSE POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED ABSTENTIONS FROM THE LABOR SECTOR. SO FAR AS MANIPULATION IS CONCERNED, THE OBVIOUS DEFENSE ASIDE FROM OUR OWN INFORMATION THAT THE GOS INTENDED NONE AND SOUGHT TO AVOID IT, IS THE ARGUMENT
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THAT 23PERCENT OF THE ELIGIBLE VOTERS FELT NO COMPULSION TO GO TO THE POLLS, AND THAT THEIR ABSTENTIONS WERE COUNTED. A SENIOR LEVEL POLITICAL OFFICIAL BEFORE THE VOTE COUNT REAFFIRMED TO EMBOFF THE GOS HOPE THAT THE "YES" VOTE WOULD NOT REACH THE 90PERCENT LEVEL, LEST CHARGES OF MANIPULATION OCCUR. HE ADDED, THAT TOUGH THE GOS WAS SCRUPULOUS, IT WAS ALWAYS POSSIBLE THAT SOME ZEALOUS COUNTRY VOTE COUNTERS MIGHT FIND IT HARD TO ABANDON THE PRACTICES OF THE PAST. THE VOTE WAS SECRET, THE VOTE-COUNTING OPEN TO PUBLIC AND THE PRESS, AND IN MAJOR LOCALITIES NO SUCH MANIPULATION WOULD SEEM POSSIBLE.

5. THE RESULTS DO NOT SAY MUCH ABOUT THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF POLITICAL FORCES EXCEPT FOR THE DEMONSTRATION OF ULTRA RIGHT POPULAR WEAKNESS. POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED RANGE ALL THE WAY FROM THE CONSERVATIVE ALIANZA POPULAR THROUGH THE CENTER AND ON

TO THE MODERATE LEFT. THE ABSTENTION CAMPAIGN DIDN'T GET VERY FAR, AND SOME SOCIALISTS FROM THE PSOE AND THE SMALLER PSP (WHOSE LEADER TIENO GALVAN DRIPPED ALL MENTION OF ABSTENTION IN HIS LAST STATEMENT PRAISING SUAREZ' SPEECH) PROBABLY ALSO VOTED FOR IT (REF). ONE MIGHT TENTATIVELY DEDUCE SUPPORT FOR THE THESIS THAT THE COMMUNISTS DO NOT POSSESS MORE THAN 10PERCENT OF THE POPULAR VOTE, ELSE THE ABSTENTION FIGURE WHICH INCLUDES SOME SOCIALISTS AND THE INEVITABLE STAY-AT-HOMES WOULD HAVE BEEN HIGHER.

6. IN SUM, THE REFERENDUM BRINGS TO A SUCCESSFUL END THE FIRST STAGE OF THE REFORM, BY ESTABLISHING AN UNQUESTIONABLE LEGITIMACY FOR A NEW PARLIAMENTARY, DEMOCRATIC MONARCHY TO REPLACE THE SINGULAR LEGITIMACY THAT ENDED WITH FRANCO'S DEATH. THE NEXT STAGE WILL NOT BE EASY, INCLUDING, THE RULES OF THE ELECTORAL GAME, THE DIFFICULT BUSINESS OF BUILDING A COHERENT POLITICAL SYSTEM AND, AFTER ELECTIONS, THE WRITING OF A MODERN, HOPEFULLY WORKABLE, CONSTITUTION.

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7. WE EXPECT THE PALPABLE NERVOUSNESS IN POLITICAL CIRCLES AND FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC MEDIA TO NOW DIMINISH EVEN THOUGH THE ORIOL KIDNAPPING STILL CONFRONTS THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE FROM EXTREMES OF LEFT AND RIGHT WILL NOT END WITH THE REFERENDUM. EVEN HERE, THE ORDERLY, PEACEFUL WAY IN WHICH THE SPANISH VOTED YESTERDAY SUGGESTS THE TEMPER OF THE PEOPLE. THE KING AND SUAREZ HAVE EVERY REASON TO BE PLEASED THIS MORNING. STABLER

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